

Message Text

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60

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SUBJECT: IDF RETENTION ISSUE: PROGRESSIVE PARTY AND DEFENSE ISSUE

REF: REYKJAVIK 1465, 1466 AND 1519

1. FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF DEC 1 EDITORIAL BY TOMAS KARLSSON IN TIMINN AND STRONG REACTION FROM PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE (SEE REFTELS), PROGRESSIVE PARTY HAS ATTEMPTED TO FIND WAY TO DEAL WITH DEFENSE ISSUE WITHOUT SPLITTING EITHER GOVERNMENT COALITION OR PP ITSELF. ACCORDING TO A GENERALLY RELIABLE LOCAL SOURCE, COMMITTEE HAS NOW BEEN SET UP WITHIN PP TO STUDY QUESTION AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARTY POLICY. COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF PRIMINISTER JOHANNESSON, FONMIN AGUSTSSON, THORARINN THORARINSSON (EDITOR OF TIMINN), EYSTEINSS JONSSON (SPEAKER OF UNITED ALTHING AND FORMER CHAIRMAN OF PP), JON SKAFTASON (ALTHING MEMBER), AND STEINGRIMUR HERMANS-SON (ALTHING MEMBER AND SON OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER HERMAN JONASSON),

2. ABOVE COMMITTEE THUS CONSISTS OF ONE SUPPORTER OF IDF

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(SKAFTASON), THREE STRONG OPPONENTS (THORARINSSON, JONSSON AND

HERMANSSON), ONE PERSON WHOSE FIRST CONCERN SEEMS TO BE HOLDING PP TOGETHER (JOHANNESSON) AND ONE WHO SEEMS TO BEND WITH ANY WIND (AGUSTSSON). THERE SEEMS LITTLE TO HOPE FOR FROM SUCH A LINE-UP.

3. KARLSSON INSISTS HIS EDITORIAL WAS SEEN AND APPROVED BY BOTH PRIMIN AND FONMIN BUT ADVERSE REACTION IN PP APPARENTLY HAS CAUSED THEM TO DECIDE TO SACRIFICE HIM. RUMOR IS HE MAY BE REMOVED FROM EDITORIAL POSITION AT TIMINN AT NEXT PARTY EXECUTIVE MEETING.

4. HERMANSSON, WHOSE FATHER'S GOVERNMENT INVOKED DEFENSE TERMINATION PROCEDURES IN 1956, IS RUMORED PLANNING TO CHALLENGE AGUSTSSON FOR LEADERSHIP AFTER NEXT ELECTION (ASSUMING RETIREMENT OF JOHANNESSON) AND HAS DECIDED WAY TO DO IT IS TO COURT ANTI-BASE ELEMENTS. HE WAS QUOTED IN PRESS RECENTLY AS SAYING ABOUT DEFENSE NEGOTIATIONS, "I WANT TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM IN SUCH WAY THAT THE MILITARY LEAVE AND THE PRESENT GOVT STAYS." PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE NEWSPAPER THJODVILJINN FEATURED THIS STATEMENT AND SAID IT INDICATES THAT "PROGRESSIVES REALIZE CARRYING OUT PROMISES THEY HAVE GIVEN IS THE ONLY CONDITION ON WHICH THERE CAN BE CONTINUED GOVERNMENT COOPERATION."

5. SAME SOURCE TOLD US THAT RAGNAR ARNALDS, CHAIRMAN OF PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE, BELIEVES HE HAS COMMITMENT FROM PP THAT BASE TERMINATION LEGISLATION WILL BE INTRODUCED IN ALTHING AS SOON AS IT RECONVENES JANUARY. COMMENT: THIS IS ONE OF SEVERAL RUMORS THAT PERSIST. THE THIRD ROUND OF IDF NEGOTIATIONS WILL BE CRUCIAL IN DETERMINING WHETHER THIS IS ACCURATE. IRVING

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